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PUNJAB-HARYANA REGION: GROWTH OF POPULATION: 2001-11

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It may be interesting to analyze population growth rate and spatial pattern of population growth of Punjab and Haryana region, the most important food basket of the country. During 2001-11 the region recorded a growth rate of 16.60 per cent in its population which was marginally lower than the national average of 17.64 per cent (Table 1). It implies a relatively low rate of natural increase in the study region. While the country displayed a natural rate of increase of 15.2 per cent during 2001-11, Punjab had only 9.9 per cent and the corresponding figure for Haryana sub-region, however, still continued to be 16.00 per cent. Thus, while Punjab sub-region seemed to have achieved a significant fall in its total fertility rate (TFR) from 2.4 children per woman in 2000 to 1.7 children per woman in 2013 which was even lower than the replacement level (2.1), Haryana sub-region was still struggling hard to cut its TFR down to the replacement level despite a significant fall in its TFR from 3.2 to 2.2 children per woman during the same period (2000-13). The wide differences in natural rate of increase in the two sub-regions of the study area have been the product of, among other factors, their differences in status of women in the respective societies.

On an average, the Punjab sub-region recorded a growth rate of 13.73 per cent during 2001-11, while in case of Haryana sub-region it was 19.90 per cent which was almost 50 per cent higher than that of its Punjab counterpart despite a sharper fall in case of Haryana during the period under review. It may be interesting to note that while the population growth rate in

Punjab sub-region declined from 20.10 per cent during 1991-2001 to 13.73 per cent in 2001-11 recording a fall of – 6.37 percentile points, in case of Haryana the percentile fall was steeper (-8.53) from a growth rate of 28.43 per cent (1991-2001) to 19.90 per cent (2001-11).

Not only that, within each sub-region too, there are significant spatial variations in consonance with levels of socio-economic development. In case of Punjab region as one moves from East to West, the population growth rate increases by and large with a few exceptions. In case of Haryana sub-region, reverse is the case. The population growth rate declines as one move from east to west (Fig.1). Thus, the most typical feature of the region under study was that it was characterized by wide sub-regional or intra-regional disparities in population growth rate in consonance with a variety of physical, cultural, social, economic, political, and locational factors culminating into employment potential of different areas.

In Punjab the lowest growth rate of only 4.58 per cent was recorded in SBS Nagar district, while SAS Nagar district located in close vicinity of capital city of Chandigarh had the distinction of having highest growth rate (32.02 per cent) of population. Leaving these extremes apart, otherwise also the population growth in Punjab varied between the highest of 19.40 per cent (Patiala, district) and lowest of 6.85 per cent (Hoshiarpur, district). Interestingly, the districts of Rupnagar and Fatehgarh Sahib located on the south-eastern margin of the state recorded very low rate of population growth due to shadow effect of SAS

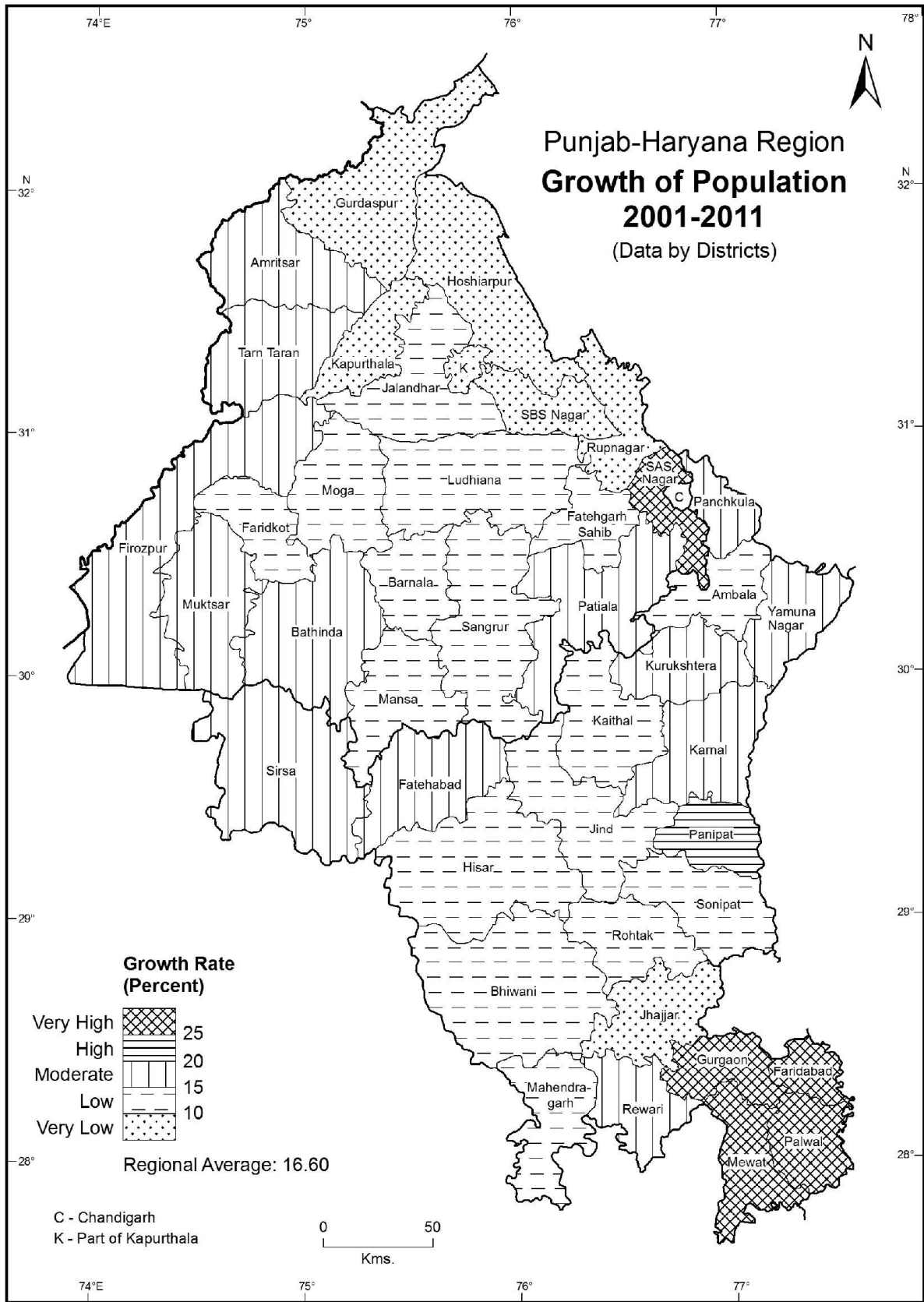


Fig. 1

Nagar which recorded a sudden spurt in its development activities after having remained in a slumber for a few decades. Bist Doab the centuries old traditional area of very low growth of population along with the district of Gurdaspur which seems to have suffered due to its border location as well as political neglect have recorded low growth rate of population during the study period (Fig. 1). As one moves westwards, the central Punjab covering a large part of Malwa sub-region displays a growth rate of 10-15 per cent, which gradually increases to 15-20 per cent further west in the western parts of Malwa tract. Other districts of Punjab registering a moderate growth rate (15-20 per cent) included Bathinda and Muktsar indicating positive impact of political patronage resulting in upgradation of

infrastructural network that helped in generating employment opportunities for the benefit of general masses. Interestingly, there was only one district in the state, SAS Nagar, which recorded a very high growth rate of population growth (32 per cent) which was more than double the state's average of 13.73 per cent. As mentioned earlier also, in case of SAS Nagar, it was the product of aggressive developmental activities taken up during the recent decades including the creation of Greater Mohali Development Authority, infrastructural network upgradation and allocation of international airport, all of which seem to have given a fillip to in-migration mostly from neighbouring districts of Rupnagar and Fatehgarh Sahib both of which recorded a slow rate of growth consequently.

Table 1
Punjab-Haryana Region: Growth of Population, 2001-2011

State/District	Percentage	State/District	Percentage
Punjab	13.73	Haryana	19.90
S.A. S. Nagar	32.02	Gurgaon	73.14
Patiala	19.40	Mewat	38.65
Tarn Taran	19.28	Faridabad	32.54
Bathinda	17.37	Palwal	25.76
Shri Mukatsar Sahib	16.10	Panipat	24.60
Firozpur	16.08	Panchkula	19.83
Amritsar	15.48	Karnal	18.14
Ludhiana	15.00	Rewari	17.64
Barnala	13.16	Kurukshetra	16.86
Sangrur	12.30	Fatehabad	16.85
Faridkot	12.18	Yamunanagar	16.57
Mansa	11.62	Sirsa	15.99
Fatehgarh Sahib	11.39	Bhiwani	14.70
Jalandhar	11.16	Kaithal	13.55
Moga	10.90	Mahendragarh	13.48
Gurdaspur	9.30	Hisar	13.45
Rupnagar	8.67	Sonipat	13.35
Kapurthala	8.37	Rohtak	12.88
Hoshiarpur	6.85	Jind	12.13
S.B.S.Nagar	4.58	Ambala	11.23
		Jhajjar	8.90
Regional Average	16.60		

Source: i) Director, Census Operation, Punjab
ii) Director, Census Operation, Haryana

In Haryana sub-region though inter-district variations range from the lowest of 8.90 per cent (Jhajjar district) and 73.14 per cent (Gurgaon district) yet leaving these extremes aside, the variations are limited between 11.23 per cent in Ambala to 38.65 per cent in Mewat district. However, very high growth of population (above 25 per cent) was confined to south-eastern districts of the state, namely, Gurgaon (73.14 Per cent), Mewat (38.65 per cent) Faridabad (32.54 per cent) and Palwal (25.76 per cent) indicating a growing concentration of the spill-over from national capital of Delhi in this segment of the NCR which seems to have emerged as the most convenient dormitory to accommodate such a spill-over. Gurgaon for instance, during the last two decades displayed unprecedented growth and has become almost Delhi's southern extension facilitated by a reasonable improvement in its infrastructural base during this period. Consequently, Gurgaon city has come to be popularly known as Bengaluru of the north due to huge concentration of information technology (IT) industry and the associated service industries here. It would not be any exaggeration to say that it is the growing concentration and congestion in Gurgaon district that has facilitated growth in the adjacent districts of Faridabad, Palwal and Mewat as well which too have close proximity to the national capital city of Delhi. These apart, the district of Panipat, located close to Delhi in the north and on the erstwhile national highway No 1 (Grand Trunk Road), the traditional home of handloom industry recorded a high growth rate of population (24.60 per cent) indicating the continuation of growth of industry in this industrial district of Haryana. Much of the south-western and central parts of Haryana by comparison displayed low to very low growth of population a clear indication of limitations of their resource base, locational disadvantage and absence of political patronage. The north-western districts and Rewari in the south and

the eastern belt along GT road displayed moderate growth rate of 15-20 per cent.

In fine, the above analysis reveals: (i) this important food basket of the country has fortunately approached the replacement level of population growth; (ii) during the last decade and a half the TFR in case of Haryana has sharply declined from 3.2 in 2000 to 2.2 in 2013 while in case of Punjab sub-region TFR has reached 1.7 much below the replacement level (2.1); (iii) however, the population growth rate in Haryana (19.90 per cent) was still almost 50 per cent higher than that of Punjab (13.73 per cent); (iv) spatially speaking, as one moves from east to west in Punjab sub-region growth rate of population increases while, in case of Haryana sub-region it declines as one moves from east to west; (v) there are only two small pockets of very high growth of population: one south of Delhi the national capital and the other in the vicinity of Chandigarh, the regional capital; and (vi) factors associated with population growth in the study region and spatial variations in the same may include: proximity to Delhi/Chandigarh; proximity to international border; physical setting i.e. sand-dunes infested tract, foothill zone, upland plain etc; history and tradition of long distance migration/emigration or service in armed forces; status of women in the society; incidence of separated families as a consequence of both in-migration and emigration; levels of infrastructural development; availability of central funding for specific projects like international airport etc.; and political patronage/neglect.

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